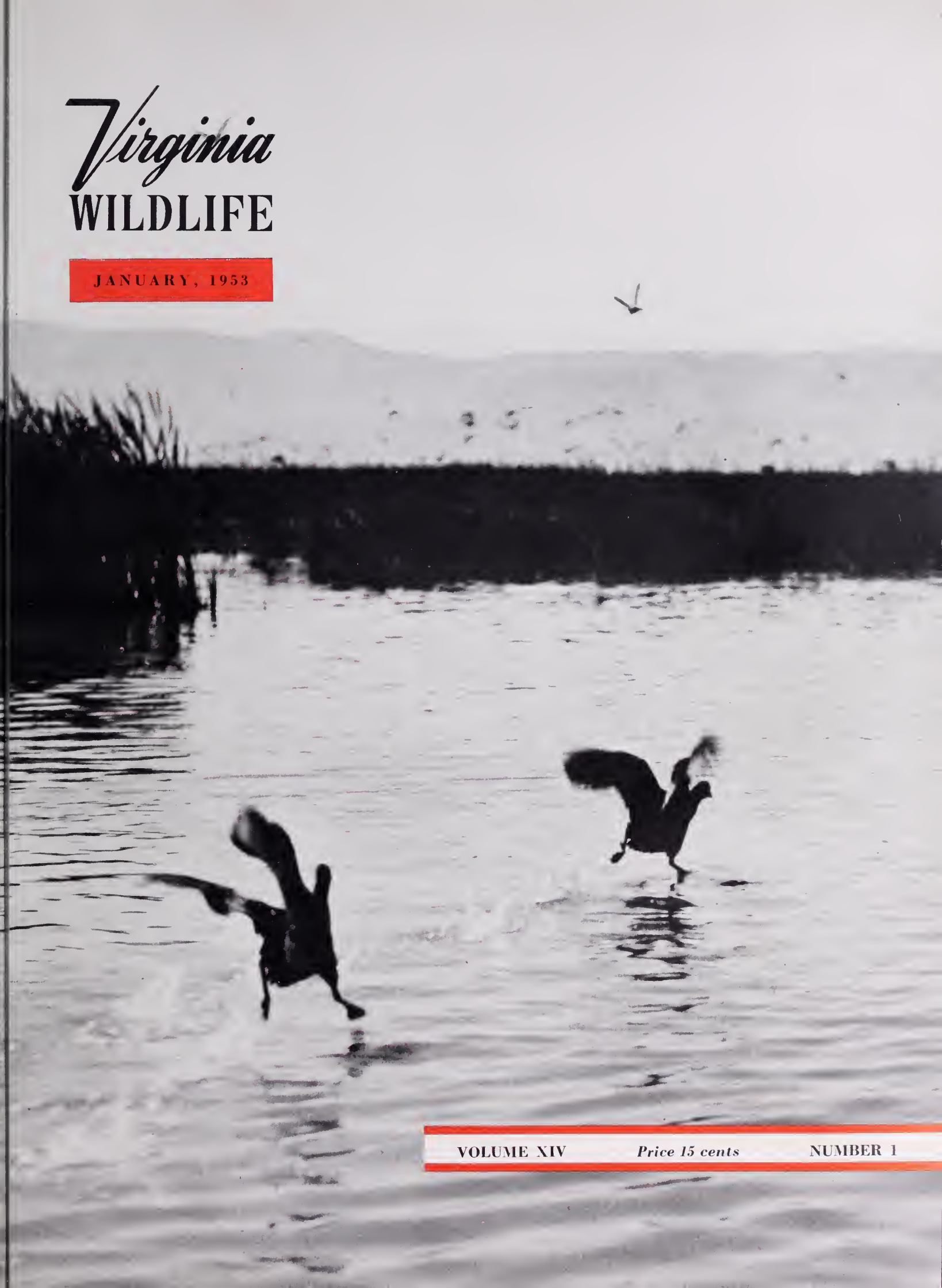
Virginia WILDLIFE

JANUARY, 1953



VOLUME XIV *Price 15 cents* NUMBER 1

Photo by Harold M. Lambert

Steady does it!

Virginia WILDLIFE

Published by VIRGINIA COMMISSION OF GAME AND INLAND FISHERIES, Richmond 13, Virginia

A Monthly Magazine Dedicated to the Conservation, Restoration, and Wise Use of Virginia's Wildlife and Related Natural Resources, and to the Betterment of Hunting and Fishing in Virginia

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

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Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries

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Cover

"Coots on the rise." When coots try to rise they skitter and spatter over the water and have a hard time getting into the air. A considerable distance of runway is required for the water-loving coot to make his take-off

U.S.F.W.S. photo by E. P. Haddon

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Retrospect

IT is appropriate at the beginning of a new year to look back upon the record of the past year, the outstanding accomplishments, and those to whom credit is due for the results.

There has never been a year since the establishment of the Commission that can approach the favorable results attained during the past twelve months. Genuine progress has been made in every phase and division of work.

Law enforcement has reached a new peak of efficiency in interest, activity, and in tangible results. This division's record of convictions for violations of the game and fish laws conclusively demonstrates that its members are alert, vigilant and constantly on the job.

The game division through unremitting effort, with the aid and co-operation of interested sportsmen and landowners, has provided more game food and habitat improvement than ever before. More turkeys have been raised and released than ever before in the history of the state. Game in all categories has either held its own or in most cases shown a substantial increase.

Another monument has been erected to the resourcefulness and far-sightedness of the fish division in the newly completed smallmouth bass hatchery on the South Fork of the Holston in Smyth County. More fish have been stocked in more streams than ever before and with the new hatchery in operation, the output will be appreciably increased in 1953. The people of the state can be justly proud of the four complete and modern hatcheries which we now have in operation. Work is in progress on two new lakes for public fishing in sections where heretofore no fishing facilities existed.

The education division has not only continued its fine work but has enlarged its sphere of activity. *Virginia Wildlife* is recognized as one of the outstanding conservation publications in the nation. The publication of *Birdlife of Virginia* proved most popular and has been highly complimented by both laymen and ornithologists. The moving picture lending library has proved extremely helpful to sportsmen's clubs and other organizations in the state. The myriad details in connection with the essay contest have been efficiently handled by this division.

The complicated and intricate financial records of the Commission have been taken care of by the fiscal division in a most satisfactory and accurate manner.

Our executive director with his immediate staff has skillfully directed and co-ordinated the entire program. With all divisions functioning smoothly, prospects are bright for achieving the projected program for 1953.

I wish to express my appreciation to the executive director and to each and every employee of the Commission for the conscientious work that has been performed which has resulted in an unparalleled record of genuine progress. I also wish to extend thanks to the Forest Services, both national and state, the Soil Conservation Districts, the Water Control Board and all other participating agencies for their aid and co-operation, and to all conservation associations in the state together with that host of individual sportsmen who have consistently supported us in our undertakings.

—BEVERLEY W. STRAS, JR.
Chairman, Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries

Appreciation

ANOTHER year, unprecedented in the history of wildlife conservation in the Old Dominion, has passed into history. Greater strides have been made and more practical benefits have been accomplished during 1952 than in any year in the history of wildlife development in Virginia.

These accomplishments are based upon four fundamental needs which have been filled, namely (a) a more efficient office and field staff of the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, (b) a more adequate revenue to accomplish the purposes and program of the Commission, (c) a better understanding and enthusiastic spirit of co-operation among the farmers and landowners, and (d) a more intelligent co-operative effort on the part of hunters and fishermen, with special emphasis on those who are primarily interested in the wildlife development in fields, woods and waters for the benefit and enjoyment of the public.

As we enter upon the New Year of 1953, I desire to express the deep and sincere appreciation of the Commission, the office personnel and the entire field staff for the commendable spirit of co-operation on the part of farm landowners, sportsmen, conservationists, the Soil Conservation Districts, the U. S. Forest Service, the State Forest Service, the State Water Control Board, the Garden Clubs, Women's Clubs, Nature Study Clubs, the Academy of Science, the public schools and the higher education institutions of learning and all other individuals and agencies for their helpfulness and co-operation extended to us in the eventful year that has just passed.

Let this fine spirit pervade the whole field of natural renewable resources during 1953 and the other years that lie ahead, and Virginia will rightly take its place and remain the most beautiful, happy, and healthful place in which to live.

—I. T. QUINN
Executive Director

Planned Land Use In Virginia

By L. M. DICKERSON

Soil Conservation Service

Land capability classes. Classes I, II, III, IV are suitable for cultivation. Classes V, VI, VII, and VIII should not be cultivated, but used as pasture, hay, woodland and wildlife

Photos courtesy S. C. S.

THE PURPOSE OF this article is to foster an understanding of the various agencies directly concerned with soil and water conservation in Virginia. With such an objective, our interest is focused at once on the Soil Conservation District. It is the natural center through which all activities can be co-ordinated to best advantage.

With this in mind, we have used a simplified activities chart (Fig. 2) to show relationships among the agencies and between them and the landowner who becomes a district co-operator. Many details of organization have been omitted because they are of no interest to the citizen with a conservation problem. This chart is supplemented with an illustration of a land use plan, prepared by a work unit conservationist of the Soil Conservation Service, and several illustrations of conservation treatments as they appear on the land (Figs. 1-4). The land use plan (Fig. 3) blueprints the locations on the farm where the assistance of various agencies is needed. Together with the farm plan of operations, it illustrates the completeness and specific detail of assistance the Soil Conservation District makes available to co-operating farmers. The treatments illustrated show in pleasing perspective the final results of combined efforts in the form of well protected and productive farm land.

On the chart we recognize four groups of agencies. They are: (1) The Soil Conservation District and supporting associations; (2) the Soil Conservation Service; (3) a special services group; and (4) facilitating co-operators, a variable group of agencies both public and private in character. Often the only common interest among the agencies in this last group is an interest in conservation and the ability to help the individual farmer to solve his particular problem. A brief review of each of these groups helps to understand the contribution each agency can make to the common interest and where to seek help on a particular problem.

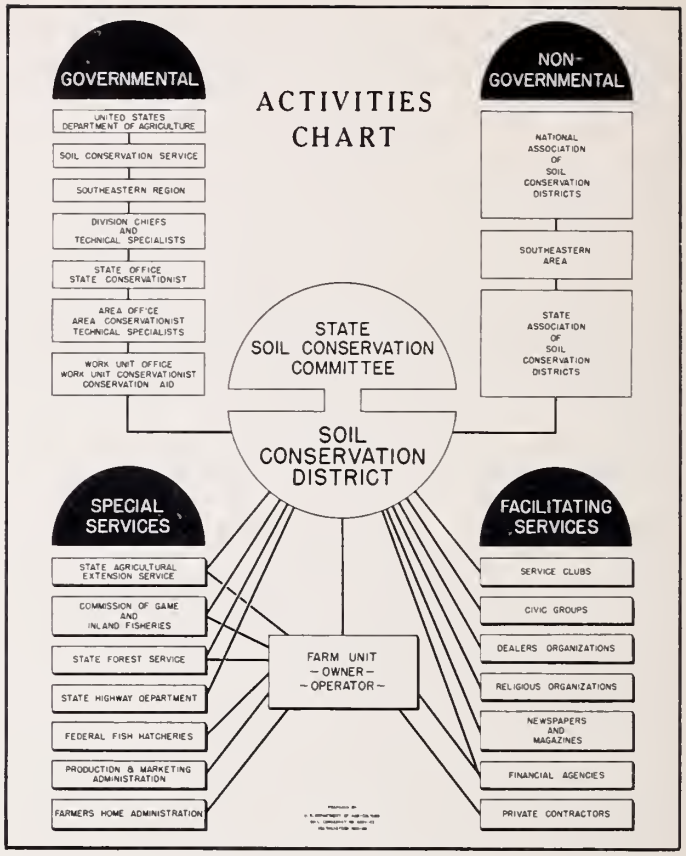
The Soil Conservation District is a local unit of government. It is organized under state law to safeguard the soil and water resources of the state and nation. Its program is developed and administered by five supervisors, three of whom are elected by popular vote of the landowners. The other two members are appointed by the State Soil Conservation Committee and include a county agricultural agent. Thus the majority control rests in elected membership and the District remains sensitive to community needs. The District levies no taxes and the supervisors are not paid a salary: consequently, the position is not attractive as political patronage. With broad powers to decide on policy and co-ordinate the activity of many agencies, the Soil Conservation District is ideally suited to foster a sound and enduring agricultural industry.

The Soil Conservation Districts and the State Soil

Conservation Committee are the legal machinery to carry on soil and water conservation work. To furnish public interest to keep it running there must be done a staggering amount of public information and educational work. The V. P. I. Agricultural Extension Service conducts these activities among farmers. They also reach many other citizens, especially rural and suburban people. To promote their work, the districts have found it expedient to organize state and national associations. The associations are a typically American institution. Their activities are financed by private subscription, sale of publications, and other self-support enterprises. They receive no public funds.

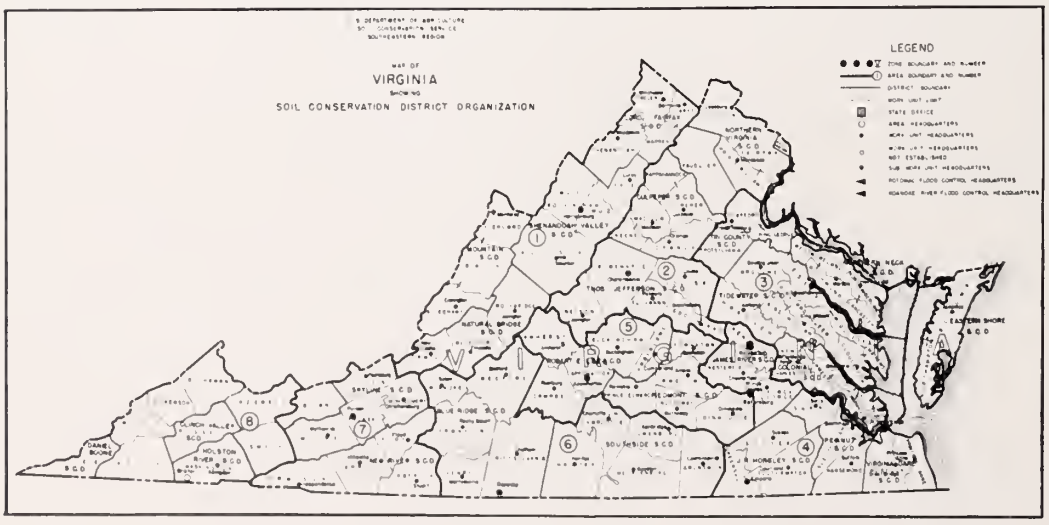
Soil Conservation Districts are organized under legal authority vested in the State Soil Conservation Committee. This committee is composed of the director of the State Agricultural Extension Service, the director of the State Experiment Station at Blacksburg, Virginia, and the State Commissioner of Agriculture and Immigration, together with one member appointed by the Governor. The Governor also appoints three farmer members for specific terms. These appointments are made from a list of qualified nominees submitted to him as specified in the Soil Conservation Districts law. The Committee may invite the Secretary of the U. S. D. A. to designate an additional member. The State Committee is an administrative body which has comparatively little dealing directly with individual landowners. It employs a small staff to administer state funds appropriated to the Committee and to supervise equipment and other facilities it provides to carry on conservation work.

The Soil Conservation Service is a bureau in the United States Department of Agriculture. As such it is obligated to safeguard the national interest in soil and water resources. To do this it provides technically trained consultants to work with landowners and operators through the medium of their district work programs. The primary objective of its entire organization is to extend this technical service to all agricultural lands as quickly as possible.

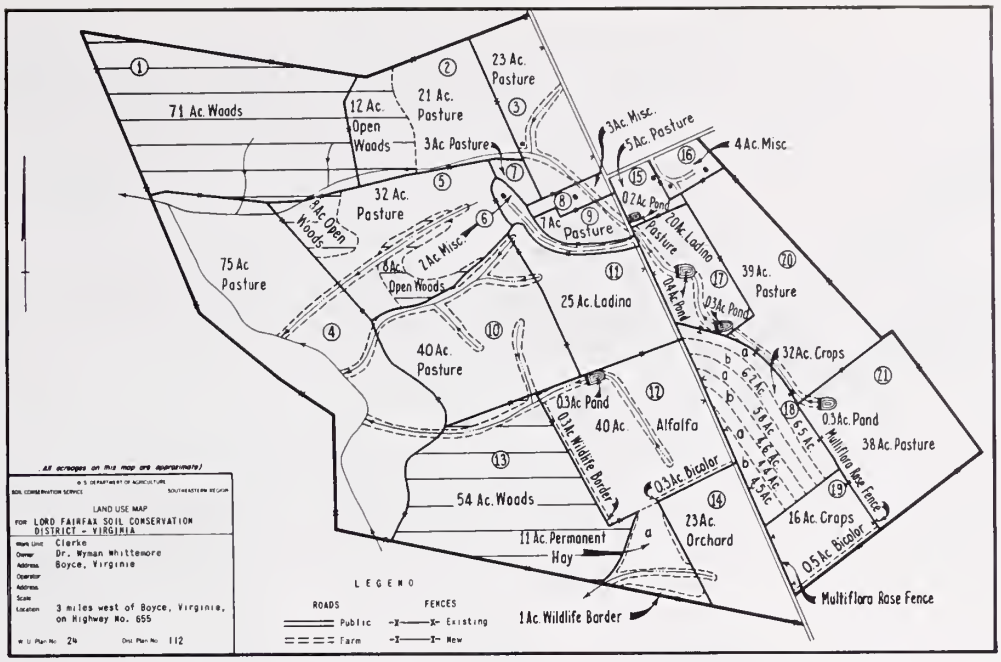


(Fig. 2) Activities Chart of the S. C. S.

The state conservationist is the administrative head of the Soil Conservation Service in the state. In addition to general supervision of the Soil Conservation Service personnel within the state, he is responsible for keeping the work program within the U. S. D. A. policies. Inter-agency relations work, personnel placement, and adjustment of over-all program and policy problems take up most of his time. His two assistants handle many of the administrative details. Direct supervision of the work units is done by a group of eight area conservationists. Each of these men supervises nine or more work units. The map in Fig. 1 shows the location



(Fig. 1) Area Offices of the Soil Conservation Service in Virginia. The present incumbents are as follows: (1) H. M. Collins, Harrisonburg (2) John A. Smart, Charlottesville (3) W. A. Phillips, Tappahannock (4) J. K. Abernathy, Jr., Emporia (5) F. F. Carr, Appomattox (6) A. D. Williamson, Danville (7) B. C. Venable, Pulaski (8) W. D. Richardson, Bristol



(Fig. 3) A land use map copy from an actual farm plan. The location of ponds, borders, fences and other developments are shown in detail

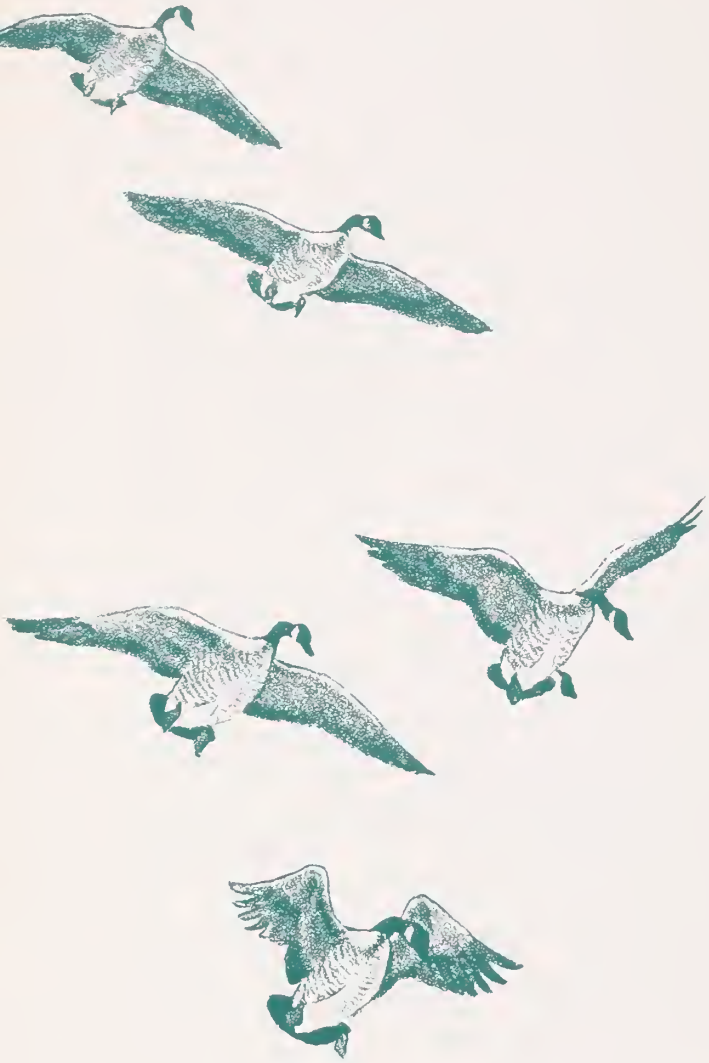
of the area offices and the men now in charge of each of them. These offices complete the supervisory organization of the Soil Conservation Service within the state.

The work unit conservationist plans land use and gives technical assistance in the establishment of conservation practices. He works directly with the farmers. He is a technical adviser to the Soil Conservation District governing body also, but most of his time is spent on the farms of his work unit. When he encounters problems of unusual difficulty, his area conservationist arranges for assistance from a technical specialist. These specialists are men with broad experience and specialized training. They work in close touch with the chief of the respective technical division in the regional office and can call on him for additional assistance when it is needed.

Many other co-operating agencies work directly with the Soil Conservation District. Those shown in the governmental group under special services (Fig. 2) are not restricted to soil conservation activities. Otherwise their relationship to the farmer and the Soil Conservation District is the same as the Soil Conservation Service. The Extension Service conducts educational activities. Game technicians assist with habitat improvement work and the game warden with protection problems. Federal fish hatcheries stock farm fish ponds. State and federal forest services provide assistance with woodland management and fire protection. Financial assistance is available on conservation practices which are included in local Production and Marketing Administration's Agricultural Conservation Program. Those agencies listed as non-governmental are under no limitations except their willingness and ability to perform under any agreement between them and the District. Many banks now make conservation loans to farmers. Private contractors often provide engineering assistance as part of their services. This list could be extended indefinitely because the only limits are the needs of the district co-operators and the ingenuity of the governing body.

(Fig. 4) Farm ponds afford better use of water for livestock, fish production, irrigation and fire protection

Looking again at the chart (Fig. 2), we see the Soil Conservation District and the State Soil Conservation Committee as the central group with legal authority and responsibility to develop and maintain the foundation for a permanent agriculture. Together with their volunteer associations they represent the social and economic welfare of us all. The Soil Conservation Service contributes the accumulated technical skill needed to plan and establish a sound land use pattern of management. The facilitating co-operators contribute a great variety of related skills, mechanical aids, financial aids, and related resources needed to get the conservation program into operation. To obtain the help of all these agencies, the man with a soil and water conservation problem needs only to consult his local Soil Conservation District supervisor, the work unit conservationist of the Soil Conservation Service, or county agent. As a district co-operator he is entitled to all the assistance available as rapidly as he is prepared to use it.



They're Coming In!

By J. J. SHOMON

FAR IN THE distance, beyond the fringe of trees that hid the sprawling marshes, the successive thudding of guns gave way to the frenzied cry of startled geese. Louder and louder the babble came and soon, over the treeline etched black against the low-lying clouds, the waving silhouettes of climbing Canadas broke into the wintry sky. We did an about-face in our blind in the middle of Virginia's Pamunkey River and gazed through the fringe of cedars in the direction of the disturbed honkers.

"Someone's gotten 'em up," said Gilbert, with a touch of nervousness in his throat. "We'd better get ready, just in case they decide to come our way."

A strong wind was cutting across the choppy river and the frigid air whipped across our beet-red noses like a draft from an icebox. But the cold had somehow snapped out of our bones. Wild geese were filling the horizon and the sound of their voices sent new blood charging through our arteries. Loaded for early morning ducks, we hurriedly pumped out our number 6's and slipped in 2's, waiting, eyes glued to the majestic sight ahead.

Upward they came, more and still more, billowing skyward like black tinders from a forest fire, their wild clamor filling the air for miles around. The lead V,

perhaps 50 birds, gained altitude slowly, then leveled off above the treetops, straightened, and headed northward into the wind. Other flocks followed. Slowly the great skeins pulled their way up the river angling away from us toward the big water ahead. Our hopes faded. I was about to say something when still another flock, larger than the rest, swelled into the morning sky. Gathering height with quickening wings, the big string loomed into a semicircle, held for a moment, then gradually turned in a huge V.

"Great Day in the Morning!" I gasped jubilantly. "They've headed this way!"

Gilbert nodded his head and began fumbling for a goose caller deep within his coat pocket. Finding it, he wet his lips, closed his mouth over one end, and blew a loud double *eee-onk*, *eee-onk onk* high into the breeze.

It was a natural enough call, perfectly pitched, and my hopes rose quickly. Again he called—two, three times—sending fluted honks across the wide river. Whether the sound carried far enough for the wise old birds to hear, we didn't know. Yet one thing was certain. The geese were coming our way and babbling a hundred voices strong, their heavy black and white wings moving up and down, long necks bucking the wind.

Gilbert kept blowing on the caller, timing his notes with the loudest of goose honks, while I took another nervous glance at the bobbing decoys. The dummies were perfect. Not that anything could have been done about them now if they weren't in order, for the geese were almost upon us. We could see the lead honkers now—a perfect frontal wedge—wings fanning the air with laborious strokes, their stocking-like necks crooked this way and that way, eyes carefully scanning every yard of water ahead. Gilbert got in a final call, then eased down beside me, waiting.

"I'll signal when," he hushed. In a moment the great wave of Canadas broke above the cedar branches and his hand shot up.

We sprang upward like a pair of jumping-jacks, throwing guns upward almost perpendicular. Three deafening blasts, simultaneous as a military volley, crashed from our automatics and sent rings of smoke skyward. But we blew our chances. Not a single feather came from the huge array of fleeting geese. Guns empty, and throats parched and chests tightened, we watched our golden hopes melt before our eyes. The great body of geese opened wide, put on speed, angled wide, and headed for the big open water a good mile ahead.

Gilbert spoke first. "Too high . . . just too darn high," he stammered, casting a long despairing look at the disappearing geese. "Should have used heavier loads—might have tumbled out a goose or two."

I tried to figure out the whole thing but let out only a big sigh, then slowly lowered my gun to the floor of the blind. "Anyway," I finally put in, "it was a pretty sight. And you can never tell, they may come back. If they do, maybe we can try buckshot?"

We stood there in the cold wind for a while watching the geese plane down to the water, their voices babbling incoherently, their descent forming a larger and larger black raft on the river. Soon they looked every bit like an acre of bulrushes on the water. "Now they'll probably just sit there all day long and give us nothing but goose talk," rasped Gilbert as we sat down on the bench. "Guess we might as well load up for ducks again—and eat."

It was a good idea. The geese were through for a while. The first flock that winged northward up the river had long cruised out of sight, and from the occasional sounds that followed, we knew they too had settled down in a wide stretch of the Pamunkey. I took a last complete look around the blind and finding nothing exciting, reloaded with 6's and settled down beside Gilbert to work on a bagged lunch and hot coffee.

"It's a funny thing," sputtered Gilbert between bites, "how these geese learn to play it safe, year after year. They come down after the first cold snap in November, feed in the wheat and corn fields by day until they're tame as their barnyard cousins. Then come opening day—and bingo! They're wild geese again. They must have a second sense or something for they sure knew exactly when to change their feeding habits. Now they feed mostly at night and just sit on the river by day."

We talked of geese thereafter for hours—Pamunkey geese. And talk is all we could do for the Canadas were down for the day, and ducks weren't flying. The cold let up a bit and the sun broke through the snow clouds. It was good to have circulation back in our feet once more.

A little later, around midday, a friend of ours joined us in the blind. His boat carried additional goose decoys and we put them out quickly. Bill was informed of our goose adventure and seemed mighty amused. "I know how you feel," he said, "I've sat here many a day and I've seen the same thing happen. All you can do is watch them."

Hours later the geese stirred once more and several small flocks got up and left for the swamplands on the south side of the river. Soon others joined them until it looked like the entire population had moved to its original location. There they babbled and honked and sang their Pamunkey goose talk as if on parade.

Toward late afternoon, ducks began to fly a little and we got off a couple of shots at some bluebills.

Then it happened.

The geese had stirred again and a mighty cloud of them appeared over the horizon. Others rose black into the sky. Something put them up and they reared into the clouds two thousand strong.

"Boys, get ready," said Bill. "This may be it. They're moving up the river again, getting ready to feed. Great guns, what a mass of geese!"

Sure enough, on they came, and straight toward us. Gilbert talked to them on his caller. Some answered note for note. One flock edged closer, then turned, and headed for the wider water. There they set their wings and took refuge on the river.

Others followed. There were as many as a hundred honkers in several flocks, but they were high—all too high.

(Continued on page 13)

Conservation Through Co-operation

By DR. WARREN B. RAINS

This is an address made by Commissioner Warren B. Rains, of Warsaw, Virginia, before the annual convention of the Virginia Wildlife Federation, Hotel John Marshall, October 26, 1952. It is recommended reading to all conservation club members as well as those not belonging to any organization.—Ed.

Commission photos by Kesteloo

IT IS A great privilege to be allowed to appear on the program of the newly organized Virginia Wildlife Federation whose membership comprises the various conservation clubs within the Commonwealth, and it is a distinct honor to have been invited to represent the Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries at this meeting.

First, let me tell you how important I think it is that we have such a large group of conservation clubs in Virginia—clubs which are building up great enthusiasm for the wise use of our natural resources. When you compress the efforts and wise thinking of these organizations into a central unit you are bound to emerge with a concentrated, powerful force which can do great good in Virginia.

As a member of the Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, I can tell you that we welcome you into existence, and that on this, your first statewide convention, I wish you continued co-ordination of effort and success. Furthermore, I want you to feel that you can always call upon me and the rest of the Commission for any help and assistance that we can give you.

The clubs which comprise your federation have been of immeasurable assistance to the Commission in making recommendations and giving us advice when needed. Also, in times of distress, we have called on them for help, sometimes on short notice, and they have come through with necessary support. I refer to the help which so many of the clubs have given the Commission to prevent legislation from being passed which would have been detrimental to our program. Nothing could be more ruinous to our efforts than *bad legislation.*

Now for some friendly advice, if I may be privileged to give it. For your program to be successful, you must have the sympathetic help of the public. You should be sure that you are right, and then, be doubly sure that the public understands what you are trying to do. From the very nature of your motto—"Conservation Through Co-operation"—do not narrow your efforts to fish and game alone, but rather, try to see the natural resource picture as a whole. All are worthy of conservation. Many resources are involved in furnishing our citizens varied forms of recreational pleasures such as motoring, hiking, camping, nature studies, and other outdoor pursuits too numerous to mention.

Our very existence depends upon natural resources, and they are so integrated in their make-up that the depletion of any one of them could seriously impair the wise use of others. The combined efforts of every good citizen are needed today, as never before, to assure that our democratic pattern of existence shall not be destroyed because of the weakness of our resource base. Is there a person in this room who can say that God has given this generation the right to destroy and take away from our children and our children's children the very things which have made America great? Is it not our desire to leave this world in as good or better condition than we found it? Your presence at this meeting answers both questions clearly.

I shall deal largely, in my limited time, with fish and game matters, for the Virginia Department of Conservation and Development takes in most of the other recreational activities.

Our present supply of fish and game is beset by many problems: we are shackled by the pressure of increased numbers of hunters and fishermen; better roads and automotive travel are making wildlife areas more accessible; more time for many to hunt and fish is causing great problems of equitable harvesting; more of our young men are learning to use guns, due to our military training program; pollution of our streams still continues; and lastly, but by far the most important, our wildlife has been herded into constricted quarters, many times unsuitable, where it is easy prey for predators and where it cannot be expected to thrive and propagate as it did in the past. All this points to an ever-increasing amount of pressure on our wildlife, and problems for your State Game Commission. The condition is made even more critical by intensive and expanding cultivation of farms, all greatly decreasing our remaining wildlife cover.

I am one of those who think that the two main factors responsible for the depletion of game are hunting pressure and habitat. Of course, I realize that other factors take a toll: predators, disease, drought, fire, poaching. But it has been my observation that if we can get solution to the first two, we can materially improve our wildlife conditions. Since we cannot do much to cut down on the numbers of hunters, we must turn our attention to the factor that yields to control—habitat improvement. The abundance of wildlife is completely dependent upon suitable habitat. This is basic.

Recently I read a report showing that one-twentieth of our woodland area in the United States, roughly 30 million acres, is burned over annually by 200,000 fires. What tragic waste! What about the game on these charred lands? Can we go there to hunt? Fire is always

A power line right-of-way before planting for wildlife

A similar right-of-way after planting for wildlife

a destructive agent except under special conditions. Clubs such as yours can do much to call the attention of the public to the fire danger and to sick land. The intensive use of land is growing steadily and will continue to do so as long as human population increases. We must gear our program then to the prevailing agricultural and other human uses of the land. We no longer can afford to have land wasted.

To tackle the vast problem of resource waste, we must first adopt a new philosophy of living. Here is where education comes in. There is a saying "you can't teach an old dog new tricks," but let me tell you that this is not so in conservation. I believe that with age comes the desire to conserve. Some of the finest and most enthusiastic conservationists I have known are older men who did not practice conservation in their youth. They did not need to, for when they were boys there was an abundance. But times have changed. Now we seldom miss an opportunity to teach a child the meaning of wise use or to relate the new concepts of conservation to an adult.

Now for some further suggestions. May I urge you to keep yourselves informed. Exchange ideas between clubs; subscribe to conservation magazines; become an informed group; be a "doing" organization and not a debating society. In other words, be prepared and then go out and teach and practice conservation.

As far as our Commission is concerned, we are greatly expanding our educational program, for we feel that in teaching the youth of Virginia the value of our natural resources, it will become embedded in their minds. The 4-H Clubs and other youth groups are doing some excellent work in the field of conservation, and this is encouraging indeed, but guidance is needed. We are doing all we can to co-operate with these organizations.

Speaking of restoration, it is wonderful how nature strives to overcome the abuses of man to natural resources if left alone. A running stream will purify itself if abuse is halted; burned areas will reforest themselves in time; and a protected area with suitable habitat will again abound in game if man is excluded. Some of us damn the man who posts his land. I am not an advocate of promiscuous posting of land, but I do believe that in heavily concentrated hunting areas an occasional posted farm will provide breeding stock for the coming year which would otherwise be destroyed.

We can do much with the rearing of fish to restock the public waters, but I seriously doubt the value of our pen-raised game, especially quail. Nature is the best provider and man can only help.

I have attended many conservation meetings and I have yet to find a blueprint of conservation that is 100 per cent effective. I think we are accomplishing much through projects, but there is far more to be done. Laws help, but they are not the complete answer. In many ways we have to penalize the honest sportsman because of the lawless element which takes a huge toll annually of our wildlife in spite of warden services. I wish to say that I think our state laws are far too lenient with the fish and game law violator. The hunter has far greater fear of violating the federal laws for the penalty is much stiffer. In many instances some Virginia courts are reluctant to impose fines at all or when they do, it is the minimum one. This is very discouraging to the wardens and does not invite active, enthusiastic work on their part.

In this brief paper, I have attempted to bring before you some of the facts as I see them, not new, but which should be infused into the mind of every true sportsman. It is my hope that every sportsman's club in Virginia will discover the basic fact that without suitable habitat we can have no increase in wildlife. Habitat restoration is our big hope. We must preserve and restore every acre of suitable habitat that can be found. That is the only known way to success in this field.

In conclusion, may I leave with you a thought which I am told is prominently inscribed on posters in many sections of the African jungle owned by the British Government. The message reads as follows:

> *The wildlife of today is not ours to dispose of as we please. We have it in trust. We must account for it to those who come after.*
>
> *Signed: His Majesty the King.*

A COUNTRYMAN WALKS IN THE OPEN

By JOHN H. DAY

Editor's Note: You will find no startling news in the little article that follows. It is a reprint of the New Year column written by JOHN H. DAY, of Mayview, Pennsylvania, whose syndicated outdoor column is published in a number of the newspapers of that state. If you love the out-of-doors in the same way as John Day and your editor you will enjoy it.

THE NIGHT WIND huffed and puffed at a tremendous rate, producing great crashing chords in the timber on the ridge above the valley stream. As the night wore on the wind-music roared into a smashing midnight *maestoso* which practically blew the Old Year out of the countryside and freighted in an eager New Year riding the gales of destiny.

The countryman walked out and stood for a moment in the lee of the house while the swaggering gusts bullied December off the calendar and pushed the young January into the picture. Now comes the midnight of the year, low twelve in the winter woods as the timberlands sleep out the cold dark days before the dawn of another surging springtide. The Anglo-Saxons called this first month the "wolf month," in allusion to the fact that hunger then made the wolves bold enough to come into their villages.

Even as the two-faced Janus stood at the threshold of the year, the countryman looks back in fond memory across many pleasant trips afield while planning bigger wayside worlds to conquer in the days that lie ahead. He savors once again in mind's eye the "red-letter" incidents of a whole year's weekendings in the open.

There was the blistering mid-summer day he stood knee-deep in fragrant Labrador tea in a lonely northern swamp and found for the first time the odd pitcher plant growing amid the sodden sphagnum. And a rainy day in another bog when he followed along the fresh imprints left by a huge black bear who had preceded him across the barrens.

Chance moments of rare natural beauty etch themselves permanently in the countryman's day book of memories. He recalls the spring day he waded the deep drifts of showy trillium and crossed the rise to emerge suddenly in a breath-taking sea of dogwood bloom. And the tiny clump of yellow daffodils which lighted up a corner deep among the hemlocks along a remote trout stream—daffodils planted in that odd corner by flood waters which had pirated the bulbs from the site of a pioneer cabin many miles upstream.

It was during a bright October afternoon that the countryman broke free of the heavy timber and faced the driving wind in an upland pasture. A great bird took wing from the trees to the left, quartered across into the teeth of the gale, and thrilled the hiker with a memorable exhibition of the power and grace of the eagle in flight. Many other delightful wayside moments during the late year passed in review as the countryman looked back.

Now again it is January and a new year of exciting possibilities stretches out ahead. Soon the groundhog will test the sunshine and the skunk cabbage will send up the first trial balloons. Then the red maples and the airy shadbush will stain the somber timberlands with courageous banners. Once more the angler will trace out the cascading mountain streams in the April run-off. Then will come the first waves of the returning birds and the matchless beauty of the spring flower show.

As he faces the New Year the countryman feels an impatient urge to be up and doing. No man will ever read the complete book of the outdoors. There are many miles of wayside rambling out ahead. Just over the next rise may be a rare orchid, or a new warbler. This is certainly the year of decision as regards a certain lunker of a trout who has so far won every encounter in fair flight.

One thing bothers the countryman as he girds for another year of weekends along the wayside trails. This single disturbing factor is the downright selfishness of many of his fellow men, who seem bound and determined that as little as possible of the simple beauty of the outdoors be left for the pleasure and enjoyment of coming generations.

He walks the countryside and notes the utter devastation of the strip mine operations. He sees the once-limpid streams reeking with foulest pollution. Here the farmer's fence wire has been ruthlessly cut to allow passage for a so-called sportsman and his dogs. There the gate bars are carelessly thrown down. Sawmill men comb the countryside for the pitifully few acres of good timber still undemolished.

For all who love the wayside trails the countryman wishes good hiking in 1953. He hopes fervently that all men who can strike a blow in the cause of sensible conservation will strike that blow this year.

THEY'RE COMING IN

(*Continued from page 9*)

Another flock appeared in the south and this one headed toward us—but high again.

"If this bunch comes over, let's take a chance with buckshot," I suggested. "It may be our only chance."

Not a quibble came from anyone. Automatically we changed to buckloads, then got ready. The birds were about 150 yards up and winging fast. Then the lead gander dropped his wings slightly and started down. Others followed. A hundred babbling geese were crowding to our blind dead set to land!

Downward they dropped—now only a 100 yards up. They were beginning to drop so low that it never occurred to us to change loads. In fact, there was no time. We fingered our guns.

In seconds they were upon us. Geese to the right, to the left, overhead—everywhere!

"I'll say when," said Gilbert. "Take two apiece!"

At his command we jumped to our feet. Geese were planing around us by the carload, some only 25 yards away. They were thick as blackbirds and gabbing a chant of honker talk such as I've never heard.

I swung toward one goose as he set his wings for a landing. He was big as a swan. Gilbert and Bill opened up. I fired. We all fired. Buckshot splattered the water all around. Geese couldn't help but pile in—their momentum was that great. They stayed only seconds. Before we could collect our senses—we emptied our guns, and they were gone. We never hit a single one!

A more surprised and chagrined bunch of waterfowlers you never saw.

"Boys, we've had it," I said after a long silence. "We'll never get another chance like this."

For ten minutes we just shook our heads and lamented. "If we'd only used 2's or 6's. If only we hadn't changed to buckshot. How foolish can you get!"

That evening, driving back to Richmond, all we could see was Canada geese begging to come in, and we out there, loaded for deer.

"Yes, sir," exclaimed Gilbert after some long silence in the car, "don't ever suggest buckshot to me again. *Don't even mention buckshot!*"

I said nothing. Bill said nothing. What could be said when a skyful of Canadas shower your blind and you muff your chance of a lifetime?

But that's waterfowling for you and we were glad, at least, to have had the chance. That's what makes goose hunting the sport it is.

When heavy snows blanket foods and prolonged low temperatures weaken the resistance of wildlife—
then come to the rescue of our wild folk . . .

Commission photos by Kesteloo

Feed game

Aid furred animals

Help songbirds

WHEN THE COLD SNAP COMES . . .
AND THE SNOWS PILE UP . . .
COME TO THE AID OF WILDLIFE

Help with food, cover, and protection

For suggestions, here are some things you can do

Go out and help feed wildlife

Deposit foods in sheltered areas . . .

on bare ground under trees . . .

. . . in trunk crevices . . .

. . . and under rocks

At home, sweep away snow under shrubs . . .

. . . and scatter seed for birds

Chestnuts Again!

By JOHN W. McKAY*

Commission photos by Kesteloo

INTEREST in the planting of Chinese chestnuts (*Castanea mollissima*) during the last few years has been so great that nurserymen have had difficulty in keeping stocks of trees on hand. There are several reasons why this interest has increased. The American people are finding that Chinese chestnuts can be grown successfully. The trees are not killed by the chestnut blight organism that destroyed the stands of American chestnut. That Chinese chestnuts are not killed by blight is perhaps the most important reason since it requires a long time for the general public to become aware of the characteristics of an introduced species of plant. Many people still believe that all kinds of chestnuts are just as subject to the blight as the American species.

The chestnut blight organism is now in Europe and is making rapid inroads against the European chestnut on that continent. This means that within another decade or so chestnut production in Europe will probably be greatly curtailed and the world supply of nuts greatly reduced. Hence, orchards of Chinese chestnuts planted now are likely to come into bearing when the world supply of chestnuts is diminishing and of course, the European countries also are taking steps to introduce resistant species and get trees established as fast as possible so that they will come into bearing before the native supply of nut is entirely gone.

Chinese chestnut trees have been planted in increasing numbers during the last few years. Because sportsmen's groups, especially in the northeastern part of the country, have become interested in the Chinese chestnut for wildlife food, many clubs have planted trees in coves or on other suitable game lands. It is rather generally held among sportsmen that the American chestnut was connected very definitely with the well-being of wild turkeys, and probably the destruction of native chestnut stands by blight caused the decline of the wild turkey as a game bird in the eastern part of the country. Hence, people who are now trying to restore the wild turkey in certain areas of the eastern mountains are beginning to take into account the fact that chestnut trees planted in such areas might provide the necessary food to make the wild turkey again a successful member of the wildlife population in these areas.

The widespread interest in planting Chinese chestnut at present is based largely on the fact that the trees will become good producers of high-quality edible nuts. For this reason many homeowners are purchasing a few trees to plant in the yard or around the barn for producing nuts for home consumption. A number of fruit growers have become so enthusiastic about the prospects of growing chestnuts as a commercial orchard crop that they have planted several acres of orchard land to Chinese chestnut.

The Chinese chestnut grows to the size of a large apple tree or in some cases somewhat larger. It is characteristically a round-headed spreading tree of a form that makes it ideally suited to the production of large crops of nuts. Trees planted in an orchard should be spaced at least 40 feet apart; otherwise they will crowd each other after 15 or more years. At present seedling trees are largely used in planting orchards; since chestnut is almost entirely cross-pollinated a great deal of variation can be expected in seedling trees and nuts. For example, some trees will come into bearing in four or five years from the time the seed was planted while others will require six to ten years or even longer. The seedlings will also show a high degree of variation in other characteristics including vigor, type of growth, and nut size and color. On the other hand, grafted trees will come into bearing much sooner than most seedlings. Usually they will bear a few nuts the second year in the orchard and yield will increase rapidly thereafter. Grafted trees will also exhibit much greater uniformity in all horticultural characteristics than seedlings. It is important to bear in mind that the Chinese chestnut is self-sterile and more than one variety of grafted trees must be included in the orchard. A single large chestnut tree, for example, will not produce more than a handful of nuts if trees of another variety or seedlings are not nearby to cross-pollinate it.

The Chinese chestnut will grow well on a variety of soils but experience indicates that it prefers a deep, fertile, well-drained, sandy loam. The American chestnut grew on high ridges and on soil that in many instances was very gravelly and low in fertility. The Chinese

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chestnut because of its tendency to produce large crops of nuts does not do well on thin or poor soil. For this reason it is necessary to fertilize heavily when the trees are planted on such soil. However, no fertilizer should be applied during the first year after they are planted because of the danger of injuring them. Beginning the second year the trees should be fertilized in the spring, several weeks before growth starts, by applying a standard fertilizer such as a 5-10-5 mixture at the rate of two pounds for each year of tree age. Fertilizer definitely should not be placed in the hole when the tree is planted because of the danger of injuring the roots before the tree has become established.

The site chosen for the planting of Chinese chestnut trees has a great deal to do with successful nut production. The trees should be planted on high or sloping ground in order to provide air drainage in the spring when late frosts are likely to kill the buds after they start to grow. The Chinese chestnut tree tends to respond very quickly to warm periods early in the spring. After a few warm days the sap may begin to rise and the buds may start to swell before danger of the last killing frost is over. For this reason the trees should be planted on ground not subject to heavy late spring frosts so that the buds will not be killed by them.

Young transplanted Chinese chestnut trees start very slowly because they do not have fibrous root systems. For this reason the trees cannot compete with grass, briars, and other weeds for moisture and nutrients and must receive good care during the first two or three years after transplanting so that they will become established. It is best to practice clean cultivation around the trees, keeping all briars and other weeds removed from an area 6 to 10 feet in diameter around each tree until it is established. Many fruit growers who plant orchards of Chinese chestnut trees also plant row crops between them for the first few years in order to utilize the land. Corn, beans, cotton and almost any other crop suited to row cultivation can be grown between the tree rows.

Top: Research has shown that Chinese chestnuts are not killed by the chestnut blight

Bottom: A stand of three year old Chinese chestnut seedlings

There are several important insect pests that attack chestnut trees, chief of these being the Japanese beetle and the chestnut weevils. Japanese beetles cause serious injuries to the trees in some areas by eating the leaves. These insects can be readily controlled by spraying the leaves with DDT. In some localities chestnut weevils are responsible for "wormy" nuts at harvest. These insects can also be controlled by spraying with DDT late in the summer. Full directions may be obtained from the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

In 1949 the United States Department of Agriculture released 3 new horticultural varieties of Chinese chestnut for general planting and testing over the eastern part of the country. These varieties were given the Chinese names Nanking, Meiling, and Kuling. They originated from a special planting of seed imported direct from China in 1936. In 1938 an orchard of some 400 seedlings grown from this shipment of seed was planted at Albany, Georgia. For some unaccountable reason a high proportion of these trees were superior and high producing. Three of the best were selected as the parent trees of the three new varieties. They produced 75 to 100 pounds of nuts per tree in 1947 at 10 years of age and since that time have been producing regularly at this rate or even a higher one. In addition to being high yielding the trees produce large, high quality nuts that keep well and are very attractive and palatable. The trees are also well suited for shade and other yard uses. They may be headed high so that it is easy to walk underneath them, and their spreading habit makes them ideally suitable for this purpose. The additional utility they have as nut-producing trees makes them serve a dual purpose for the home owner.

Because the new varieties have not yet been tested over a wide area little is yet known in regard to their nut production possibilities under diverse climatic conditions. The Chinese chestnut as a species, however, is now being widely grown over the lake region of the United States and in many areas of the New England states as well as in the central and southern states. The tree seems to be hardy as long as it is dormant and many reports indicate that when it is perfectly dormant, it will withstand temperatures as low as 20° or 30° below 0°F. The question whether the new varieties will yield sat-

The Chinese chestnut grows to the size of a large apple tree. This tree is 18 years old

isfactory crops of nuts in these northern areas remains yet to be determined.

The planting of Chinese chestnut trees on game lands to provide shelter and food for various species of wildlife is receiving much attention in various parts of the country. This is true especially in areas where wild turkey and grouse are being brought back as game birds. Without much question the principal limitation is the difficulty of establishing the trees when they are transplanted from the nursery to the forest. One- or two-year-old Chinese chestnut trees cannot be transplanted to game or forest lands and become successfully established in the same way as pine and certain other forest trees. Chinese chestnut trees do not have the same ability to compete with grass, weeds, shrubs or other trees as do pine and certain other forest tree seedlings.

A small Chinese chestnut tree ready for transplanting has very few small, fibrous feeding roots and for this reason it starts growth very slowly. Without care and attention grass and weeds soon choke out the young tree and it is lost in the struggle for existence. Only where brush and other weeds could be mowed or cut around the young trees would they have a chance to become established and grow successfully into large trees.

Perhaps the most successful method of encouraging the planting of Chinese chestnuts for game purposes would be a program under which individual farmers would plant several trees on their own farms. Then the individual planters would have enough interest in the trees to take care of them during the first few years so that they could become established properly.

In this connection it might be mentioned that the U. S. Department of Agriculture has had under observation for several years a variety (clone) of Chinese chestnut that produces heavy crops of rather small nuts of a size suited for turkey or grouse food. This variety yields such heavy crops of nuts that only two or three trees grown in full sunlight would be required to produce a large amount of game food. The original tree of this variety produced over 100 pounds of nuts when it was 12 years old. It was removed when it was 13 years of age because the land was needed for other uses and at that time several large blight cankers had appeared on the lower limbs. Whether these cankers meant that the tree was susceptible to blight only when it was weakened by production of large crops of nuts or otherwise was not determined. Two trees topworked 4 years ago with scions from it, however, have borne nuts for 3 years at Beltsville without developing blight. These trees also produce heavy crops of nuts. It is possible that grafted trees of this variety might be worth planting for game purposes in spite of the fact that they would cost more than seedling trees. Since the Chinese chestnut is self-unfruitful, it would be necessary to plant trees of one other variety to pollinate the variety in question. Hence, a farmer would have to plant as many as four or five trees in order to be sure to have one or two trees of each variety established. This variety has been unofficially called the "turkey" chestnut because of the small size of the nuts that makes them ideally suited for eating by turkeys.

The use that the Chinese chestnut may have in wildlife plantings is still in the experimental stage, but results in certain mountainous areas of the east are very encouraging. The work of J. D. Diller[1] in developing a method of establishing forest plantings of Chinese chestnuts in cut over forests has a definite relation to wildlife management practices because of the nuts produced in such plantings. The writer recently visited game lands in Pennsylvania and saw stands of Chinese chestnut trees eight to ten years old, many of the trees bearing fair crops of nuts. In many cases, however, the trees were planted too close together and there was too much competition and shade from other trees for them to yield very large crops. This is one point that should be borne in mind whenever Chinese chestnut trees are planted for the production of nuts. The spacing of the trees should be at least 40 feet in order to give them room to develop into round-headed trees that produce maximum crops of nuts. When the trees are planted only 8 to 10 feet apart, as in forest plantings, they soon crowd each other and nuts are produced only in the tops. Under such conditions the trees remain mostly vegetative and produce tall straight trunks but shading and eventual killing of lower branches occur. However, a forest area of these trees would produce sufficient nuts as wildlife food to be of consequence from the sportsman's standpoint. A few well-grown orchard trees properly spaced and cared for would produce a much greater quantity of nuts than a similar area devoted to forest trees.

The present interest in planting Chinese chestnut trees in orchards for nut production assures this crop a place in the future of American horticulture. The fact that the species thrives under a variety of soil and climatic conditions probably assures it a place in wildlife management also when certain problems connected with planting and establishing the trees have been solved.

[1]Reference—Diller, Jesse D. "The Planting and Care of Blight Resistant Chestnuts for Forest Trees," U. S. D. A. Bureau of Plant Industry, Soils, and Agricultural Engineering, Forest Pathology Special Release No. 15, Revised December, 1950.

Bands Away!

By C. P. GILCHRIST, JR.

Photo by H. S. Mosby

EACH FALL hunters from all over Virginia sally forth into the marshes, rivers and fields in quest of waterfowl. Of this group of hunters some will kill ducks or geese that carry leg bands. The hunters that kill these banded birds fall into two classes: those that send the bands in as requested and those that have good intentions but never get around to it.

This writing is aimed at the second group of hunters, that they may better realize the purposes of bird banding and how important it is that the bands be returned.

Bird banding is not a new instrument in studying the habits of birds, but it is considered by ornithologists as the most reliable method of obtaining certain information about birds. Banding first began in Europe in 1899 and in this country in 1901. In 1920 bird banding was taken over from the American Bird Banding Association by the U. S. Biological Survey (now U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.) "Bird banding in North America is now under the general direction of the Fish and Wildlife Service, U. S. Department of the Interior, and the Canadian Wildlife Service, Department of Resources and Development. In the United States, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act authorizes this function, among other investigations, to obtain information necessary for improving methods of protecting migratory birds and for regulating the migratory game bird hunting seasons."* In addition to game birds, songbirds, shore birds and birds of prey are also banded.

Banding records have revealed many interesting things such as migration routes, dates of migration, extent of migration, and life span of birds in the wild. Some of the age records are as follows: A red wing blackbird banded in New York was shot 14 years later in North Carolina; a purple martin was found dead beneath the bird house where it had been banded 14 years earlier; in Newfoundland a hunter shot a black duck banded 17 years earlier on Cape Cod, Massachusetts; a Caspian tern banded in Michigan was killed 26 years later in Ohio. The banding records show the Arctic tern as making the longest annual migration of any animal. It makes a round trip of about 25,000 miles each year as it nests near the Arctic Circle and winters in the Antarctic.

Most hunters wonder just where the ducks and geese they kill come from and how old they are. The ones that are lucky enough to kill banded birds have the opportunity of obtaining this information from his band, but he will aid the Fish and Wildlife Service in making sound management plans and regulations for waterfowl by making this information available to them. If an immediate answer is not forthcoming after returning a band, do not become discouraged, but rather, continue to send in any additional bands that might come into your possession. Remember, there are thousands of band reports coming into the Bird Banding Office each year. The person who finds a band wishes to be sure of receiving a report on the history of the bird with the minimum of correspondence and within a reasonable time. To these ends the following suggestions for reporting bands are offered:

(a) Write to the: Bird Banding Office, Patuxent Research Refuge, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Laurel, Maryland.

(b) Print your full name and permanent address on your letter.

(c) Give the exact date and location (nearest town and county and state or province) where bird was found.

(d) State how the bird was obtained (shot, found dead, trapped, etc.) If found dead, indicate how long it had probably been dead.

(e) Print all numbers and letters which appear on the band.

(f) If the bird is alive, read the numbers carefully without removing the band and release the bird again with the band still attached.

(g) If the bird is dead or permanently injured, remove the band, flatten it out, and tape it to your letter. If you desire the band as a souvenir, say so and it will be returned to you after being examined.

(h) Even when the band is enclosed, record the numbers in your letter. Keep a record of the numbers yourself and refer to them in any subsequent correspondence.*

Let's not forget *this* year if we killed any banded birds to send the bands in. Not only will we gain information on the birds we kill, but we will be doing our part in furthering one of the greatest sports of them all—waterfowl hunting.

*Leaflet WL-235, Bird Banding—U.S.D.I.

Winter Bird Visitors to Virginia

By ROBERT J. WATSON

SOME PEOPLE, whose observation of the world of nature is hasty and superficial, conceive of winter as a time of nothing but lifelessness and inactivity. Observing only the bare skeletons of the leafless trees, and the absence of the riot of life and abundance which marks the natural landscape during the other seasons of the year, they find it difficult to imagine that the study of nature can offer anything of interest during the winter months. Those who take the trouble to look about them a bit more carefully, and to observe nature as she really is, do not need to be told how false is this impression. For the student of wildlife, there is as much of interest in wintertime as at any other season, if one makes the most of his opportunities of observation. Particularly is this true of birds, for no other form of wildlife is so much in evidence during winter as are the birds.

Everyone who has observed birds at all has noticed that many of our common Virginia birds leave us in autumn, not to return until the following spring. Throughout most of the state, this is true of the catbird, the house wren, the swallow, the flycatcher, and many others. Other birds not only nest here, but are hardy enough to remain throughout the autumn and winter; such are the song sparrow, cardinal, goldfinch, chickadee, and titmouse, to name only a few. And there is still a third group of birds which, in Virginia, are to be found only in winter, arriving from the north in autumn and departing with the approach of spring.

Photo by Allan D. Cruickshank from the Audubon Society

The big and handsome snowy owl is a rarity in Virginia, and is regrettably popular among gunners as a target and trophy

Some of these winter visitors are so abundant that nearly everyone who notices the birds at all has probably seen them at one time or another. Every little thicket or brush-grown fence row in Virginia during the winter has its little flock of slate-colored juncos, little sparrow-sized birds with slate-gray upper parts and tails which show conspicuous white feathers in flight. This is one of the commonest birds in the state during the winter months, although with the approach of the nesting season it disappears entirely from all but the higher mountain areas of the state. Anyone who maintains a feeding tray is sure to have these birds as visitors some time during the winter. Another common wintertime resident in most of the state, which most people have probably seen, is the white-throated sparrow, one of the most attractive of all the sparrows, with its neat black-and-white head markings and pure white throat. Like the juncos, these birds, too, favor bushy thickets and undergrowth, and as spring comes on their clearly whistled song can often be heard resounding from the shrubbery.

However, even those who have taken notice of these winter species may be surprised to learn of the variety and abundance of winter bird visitors which come down from the north to sojourn in Virginia. Some of these species occur regularly in the greater part of the state, and are very much in evidence while here; others may occur only once every few years or so, and may be of extreme rarity when they do occur at all. All of these winter visitors, however, constitute an interesting part of the wildlife of the state and lend a welcome touch of variety to the winter bird landscape.

One of the star performers of this group, so to speak, is a bird which, scarcely known in Virginia until the last few years or so, has within comparatively short time made its appearance in Virginia in considerable numbers at widely separated parts of the state, although still of irregular and uncertain occurrence. This is the evening grosbeak, a northern cousin of our common cardinal. Until less than a decade ago, most people in the state had never seen this bird. Its first large scale appearance in Virginia took place during the winter of 1945-46, when a general southward movement of the species throughout the eastern United States brought them into Virginia in some numbers. Members of the Virginia Society of Ornithology, which keeps track of such unusual developments in connection with Virginia birds, recorded them from a number of places in the state; records of some of these observations were published in the Society's journal. *The Raven*. With the advent of spring these birds disappeared, and for the next few winters were absent from most of the state before reappearing again. This year they have again made their appearance throughout many parts of the state, and have attracted considerable attention. Because of their attractive appearance, they are sure to be noticed whenever they do turn up.

They are especially fond of the seeds of the box elder, and can often be found feeding on these. They are also quite likely to occur around feeding stations. Those who maintain feeding trays might well be on the lookout for these birds between now and spring, while they are abundant. It will probably be several years before conditions of population and food supply bring about

another large scale southward movement of this species. Because of its infrequent occurrence, as well as its attractiveness, the evening grosbeak may be accounted one of the most interesting and unusual of our winter birds.

Most of our other winter residents are less showy in appearance than the evening grosbeak, but all are interesting for the student of birds. One of the most attractive is the purple finch, which is a regular winter resident in most of the state, but is likely to be overlooked, as it is no bigger than a sparrow and spends most of its time in the higher treetops. Despite its name, this bird is not purple, but rather a bright magenta-pink about the head and upper body, with brownish streaks on the back; the females and young lack the pink color. A male of this species about a feeding tray lends a bright and most unusual touch of color among its neighbors.

A walk through the winter woods and fields will usually turn up other visitors, although these, too, may sometimes allow a closer inspection by coming in around houses. Go into a pine woods, for example, and you are sure to hear the fine, lisping call of the tiny golden-crowned kinglet; this one usually keeps to the higher treetops, so you may have trouble getting a good look at his olive-green upper parts and orange-yellow crown edged with black. Here, too, on the tree trunks, one finds the inconspicuous brown creeper gleaning food from the bark, his mottled brown coloring closely resembling the trunks of the trees. The pine woods are also likely to be the winter home of the red-breasted nuthatch, a smaller cousin of the common white-breasted species. In the mountainous parts of the state, one may encounter the red crossbill, whom nature has furnished with a bill that is actually crossed at the tip, used in prying out the seeds of pine cones. The crossbill is one of the more erratic and unpredictable of winter birds, but, when it does occur, is usually found in coniferous trees. Another erratic wanderer is the pine siskin, a small, brown-streaked finch with touches of yellow on wings and tail; although this bird is of somewhat wider occurrence than the crossbill, one can never tell when to expect it.

S. C. S. photo

Every little thicket or brush-grown fence now in Virginia has its flock of slate-colored juncos in winter

Commission photo by Kesteloo

The chickadee not only nests in Virginia, but is hardy enough to remain throughout the winter

Of course, not all the winter visitors make their home in the woods. Down in the weed patches and low shrubbery, the elusive tree sparrow may be found foraging on the weed seeds which form such an important item in supporting winter bird life. He may be known by his reddish-brown cap and black breast spot. Along brushy banks of streams, the tiny winter wren, smallest and darkest of his family, flits in and out of the protecting cover, occasionally singing snatches of his remarkable tinkling little song. Another winter sparrow, commoner in the western parts of the state, is the handsome white-crowned sparrow, a close relative of the white-throat, which it resembles, although lacking the latter's pure white throat. Of more general distribution is the yellow-bellied sapsucker, a member of the woodpecker clan, distinguished at a glance by its yellow under parts and large crown-patch.

Besides these winter birds, there are still others whose occurrence in Virginia is of considerable rarity, their winter range ordinarily not extending southward into this state. Such are the big and handsome snowy owl, regrettably popular among gunners as a target and trophy, and its tiny cousin, the saw-whet owl; such also are the redpoll, a sparrow-like bird with rosy breast and red cap, and the white-winged crossbill, even rarer than the red species to which it is related. These birds are among the rarer of our winter visitors, and the occurrence of any of them is an event, ornithologically speaking. The Virginia Society of Ornithology is always interested in receiving reports of these and any other of the more unusual species of winter birds occurring in the state.

This short list by no means exhausts the birds which occur as winter residents in Virginia, but it includes most of the more outstanding species. As already indicated, not all of the birds here mentioned may be looked for every winter, and not all of them occur in every part of the state. Taken as a whole, however, they should serve to give a fair picture of the winter resident birds of the state, and may indicate the ample variety of bird life to be found in Virginia even in winter. All in all, they form an interesting and valuable addition to the wide variety of wildlife to be found within the state's borders, and should not be overlooked by those interested in birds.

Photo by R. K. T. Larson

The Norfolk Azalea Gardens. One of the outstanding projects of The Garden Club of Virginia is maintaining places of natural beauty such as this

Conservation and THE GARDEN CLUB of VIRGINIA

By MRS. J. DAVIS REED, JR.
Former chairman, Conservation Committee
The Garden Club of Virginia

THE CHARTER OF The Garden Club of Virginia states in part: "The objects of the corporation are educational . . . to promote gardening among amateurs; to protect our native trees, wildflowers and birds; to encourage civic planting; to discourage the erection or continuance of unsightly or dangerous signs along the roadsides; to aid in the restoration and preservation of historic gardens in Virginia . . . It shall be the duty of the Committee on Conservation to insure the preservation of our native trees and flowers, and all that pertains thereto."

In 1920, women with vision and wisdom incorporated these objects in their by-laws. It was their desire to protect, restore and preserve the natural beauties of our Commonwealth, and so it has been these 32 years, and so it will continue to be.

With Mrs. Malvern C. Patterson as the first president, Mrs. Henry H. Little, the first conservation chairman, sounded the right note in the prelude to the program when she placed literature in all the public schools. They, as well as succeeding club members, realized that children by nature love our trees, birds and flowers. They realized that once these children are indoctrinated with the concept that economic as well as esthetic values are involved in *keeping Virginia green*, we will be assured that future generations will improve on conservation practices of the past.

Only a "brass brain" could compute the hours which devoted women of The Garden Club of Virginia have given to the forwarding of this initial conservation resolution. Through its 36 clubs throughout the state, various conservation programs and practices have been pursued. All of the clubs seek to increase their knowledge of this vital phase of our club work, and of life itself, by having one or more programs each year based on conservation.

Speakers, slides, movies and book reviews are used to keep their members currently informed. Hikes on nature trails and inspection trips through parks, canals, forests, and game and wild flower preserves inspire and enlighten their members. Conservation is a many-faceted subject, and although our programs are varied, we hold the object in focus: to preserve and perpetuate the natural beauties of Virginia and America. The unity of purpose and marvelous friendship existing between the member clubs of The Garden Club of Virginia, and the Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs, assure that our children will eventually see our state in the pristine paradise described by Captain John Smith.

Most of our clubs have sponsored essays in the public schools. Some, such as the Winchester Garden Club, put on an essay contest every year. Our clubs have been tireless in distributing literature on birds, soil erosion, water control, tree planting, pest control, wild flowers, game and fish, fire prevention, and many other phases of good conservation practices.

They have worked not only with the schools in sponsoring conservation projects, but also with the scouts, and various civic organizations. Some of our clubs have sent young students to the nature camp, which is operated by the Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs. They have helped support the statewide wildlife essay contests, and have joined such organizations as "Friends of the Land" and "National Wildlife Federation." The Augusta, Albemarle, Dolly Madison, Fauquier and Loudoun, James River, Tuckahoe, Winchester-Clarke, Norfolk and Warrenton garden clubs belong to The Garden Club of America and work in a broader scope in conservation.

They have recently completed a survey on conservation education in schools throughout the country, and this year are making a survey on highway legislation.

The clubs have done extensive planting around camps, cemeteries, hospitals, roadsides and parks, aside, of course, from the restoration work which The Garden Club of Virginia does yearly with proceeds from Historic Garden Week. One hundred dollars is given annually to the club planting the most dogwood trees. In 1951 the Nansemond River Garden Club planted 2,245 white dogwoods, and in the same year Leesburg Garden Club planted 1,152 white dogwood trees, and the amazing total of 17,305 other trees. That year 38,630 trees of all varieties were planted by the clubs or through their leadership and inspiration.

We have had many fine guiding spirits in our conservation work, none being more interested than the late Miss Mary Belle Glennan of the Norfolk Garden Club. It was under her chairmanship that the forums on conservation were started which are now held every two years. It was she, too, who secured a monthly column for conservation in *Garden Gossip*, which has helped to inspire and to inform its readers throughout the South. Mrs. James Mann, also of The Norfolk Garden Club, during her term as conservation chairman, particularly stressed the value of placing books on plants, animals, soils and rivers, in the hands of children. She advocated the establishment of children's field museums by our member clubs, feeling that one in each community would lay a firm foundation for the conservation program of tomorrow. Mrs. Henry H. Little was one of the foremost proponents of the movement to establish Conservation Week.

One of the outstanding projects of our clubs is maintaining places of natural beauty where plants and animals may thrive undisturbed. They have guarded diligently the botanically phenomenal Seashore State Park, striving to keep it in its rare, native beauty. The Augusta Garden Club maintains a nature trail where plant material is well marked for observation and "show-me-trips" by civic organizations.

Commission photo by Mullins

The Garden Club of Virginia is ever aware of the plight of our wildlife and is constantly striving to learn more by active co-operation with the Commission

The Princess Anne Garden Club, under the leadership of Miss Elizabeth Gregory Hill, a great conservationist, maintains a wild flower preserve on Lake Lawson, where it plants native flora, and seeks to retain vanishing species. The Norfolk Garden Club owns a wildlife sanctuary, and The Petersburg Garden Club a wild flower preserve.

The clubs have exercised constant effort in preserving our natural beauty and in preventing that beauty from being marred by trash dumps and billboards. They have worked unceasingly on highway and byway beautification and in sponsoring rural zoning throughout the state. As a charter member of the associated clubs, which represent 60,000 women in Virginia, The Garden Club of Virginia, the Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs, the State Federation of Women's Clubs, and the Home Demonstration Clubs, were responsible in 1938 for legislation which restricted outdoor advertising. Under the leadership of Mrs. Harvey L. Lindsay, the associated clubs of Virginia are now working to amend and strengthen the bill.

We own two excellent "nature boxes" which were bought from the Worcester Natural History Museum. These are loaned to schools, libraries, scout lodges, and clubs throughout the state. They have proved to be of great educational value and interest, and have been most enthusiastically received wherever they have been used. Mrs. H. B. McCormac of Winchester-Clarke Garden Club performed an invaluable service when she made 18 conservation library boxes, which have been widely used in school libraries.

The clubs have compiled a collection of Virginia wild flower kodachrome slides. This year the Albemarle Garden Club gave a demonstration showing how to cut holly and ground pine for Christmas greens without destroying or disfiguring them. This will no doubt revive a worthwhile practice in our clubs. Under the leadership of Miss Elizabeth Perry of Staunton, our current conservation chairman, this practice will be emphasized as a pertinent way to overcome slaughter of our natural evergreens. Miss Perry, who also serves as conservation representative to The Garden Club of America, is dividing the clubs into five districts. She plans to re-emphasize more conservation education in the schools, realizing that this is where our greatest efforts are needed. She plans to co-ordinate the clubs into closer working units by having forums in each district instead of a statewide unit. These forums will emphasize their own local problems on conservation, and projects from the simplest to the most complex will be studied and worked out.

The garden clubs have for 30 years been holding the line, at least, in conserving our natural resources. All of them by now realize how essential this program is to our state and to our nation. For any sound conservation purpose, the women of the garden clubs will respond with alacrity. Enlist their aid!

WINNERS OF STATEWIDE BIG GAME TROPHY CONTEST

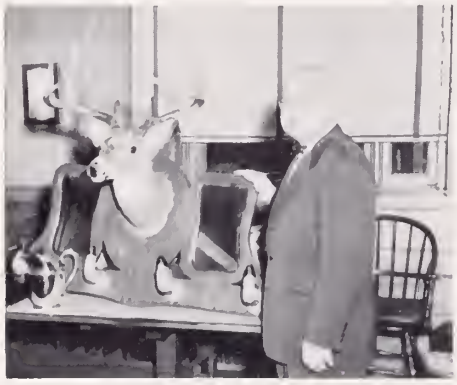
The Statewide Big Game Trophy Contest was held November 1 in the office of the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries at Richmond and the statewide winners were selected.

Taking first place in the deer trophy contest was Tom Mace of Staunton, who received a sterling water pitcher for his trophy. The deer was killed in Augusta County and was a 11-point buck.

Taking first place in the bear trophy contest was Walter Anson of Tiffin, Ohio, who was also awarded a sterling bowl for his bear trophy. The bear was killed in Rockingham County and weighed 381 pounds.

In addition to the two above mentioned awards to the first place winners, nine certificates of honorable mention were handed out, seven to entries in the deer trophy contest and two to entries in the bear trophy contest.

The Statewide Trophy Contest is an annual event sponsored by the Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries as a climax to the two regional contests held at Harrisonburg for trophies killed west of the Blue Ridge and at Newport News for trophies killed east of the Blue Ridge.


John R. George, from Harrisonburg, displays winning deer trophy and silver pitcher won by Tom Mace of Staunton

The contest on November 1 was to determine the best deer and bear specimens taken in Virginia during the 1951-52 season.

Judges in the contest were George B. Johnson, representing the east, and John R. George, representing the west. Ned Thornton, assistant chief of the Commission's game division, represented the third judge for the Commission.

COMMISSION-FOREST SERVICE SIGN CO-OPERATIVE AGREEMENT

Last October 16, I. T. Quinn, executive director of the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, and Charles L. Tebbe, regional forester of

I. T. Quinn (left) and Charles L. Tebbe shown signing co-operative program

the U. S. Forest Service with offices in Philadelphia, signed the agreement for the co-operative program on the George Washington and Thomas Jefferson national forests for the coming fiscal year 1953-54 for Pittman-Robertson aid.

PRIVATE FISHPOND OWNERS MAY SELL BREEDING STOCK

Private fishpond owners may now secure permits to sell game fish from their ponds for propagation purposes.

The 1952 Legislature enacted into law a provision authorizing the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries to issue the permits. Such permits authorize private fishpond owners who have a surplus of game fish to sell to other private owners for restocking purposes.

I. T. Quinn, Commission executive director, says the greatest drawback to pond owners until now has been in finding sources of game fish for restocking. He also reports that the recent enactment should serve to increase private pond construction in the state.

CECIL DELABARRE PASSES

Professor Cecil DeLaBarre, who did much to improve wildlife administration in Virginia and North America, died on September 10 at McGuire's Veteran's Hospital in Richmond, Va. He was 52 years of age.

A teacher at V. P. I., DeLaBarre was active in wildlife affairs throughout his life. He contributed articles to technical journals and sporting magazines, served for five years as editor of the Commission's *Virginia Wildlife* and as its director of education for two years. He played a prominent role in scientific and civic organizations including the I. W. L. A. and the Virginia Wildlife Federation. During his later years, he wrote an outdoor column for the Montgomery *News-Messenger*. His last brief lines, written only a few hours before his death, appeared on the day of his funeral. No other words could more adequately show the type of man he was.

"After deep consideration of the proposition of an outdoor writer's taking annual leave during the latter part of the summer, just when the fishing is best, this writer has come to the conclusion that it is a sound idea and hereby declares that he is on annual leave. More will be heard from us later, we hope."

TAGGED BASS TRAVELS 200 MILES

A 13-inch bass, tagged last March 27 by Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries fish technicians, was recaptured last July 5, 100 days later, by W. T. Westcott. The distance the bass traveled was approximately 200 miles.

The bass was tagged last March 27 in Deales Cove at Back Bay. It was recaptured July 5 at Freeman's Bridge in Sussex County. Breaking down the 200 miles, the route traveled was 1¼ miles through Back Bay, 40 miles in Currituck Sound, 56 miles in Albemarle Sound, 45 miles in Chowan River, 40 miles in the Nottoway River in Southampton County, and 8 miles in the Nottoway River in Sussex County.

From all indications the black bass, especially the largemouth, has the wanderlust, for this is the second time in a year that tagged fish have shown up many miles from the location in which they were tagged.

BACK BAY RADIO TOWER

The 80-foot radio tower pictured here has been erected at the game warden headquarters at Back Bay.

The tower was built by the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries to facilitate reception between the Commission's plane and law enforcement boats on Eastern Shore.

The new Back Bay radio tower

RABBIT—$25.00 PER POUND

For everyone that does his hunting before the season opens or at night, it might be well for them to take heed—$25.00 per pound for wild rabbit is pretty expensive eating. At least that is what two Gloucester County hunters found out when they were picked up by Sam Stanford, game warden for Gloucester-Mathews Counties, last October 6.

Warden Stanford with the rabbits, shotgun and flashlight of night hunters

In their attempt to evade capture by Stanford, the two night hunters wrecked their car, doing damages amounting to $35.00. On top of this they were fined a total of $98.00 plus court cost for hunting at night and before the season opened. These men paid $133.00 plus court cost for three rabbits weighing about six pounds, and they couldn't keep the rabbits either.

"BACK TO THE WOODS" FOR WHITETAILS

Deer fawns illegally captured last spring which were confiscated by the state and reared at the Cumberland Game Farm have been returned to the wild. Chester F. Phelps, chief of the game division of the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, reports that the release of seven deer was made recently in Patrick County by C. H. Shaffer, Commission game technician, and Frank Hylton, Patrick County game warden.

These releases supplemented those made last year in Patrick County. Additional releases will be made as the deer are available until the excellent but partially stocked range, which embraces parts of Patrick, Franklin and Henry Counties, is fully stocked.

RACCOON STOCKING PROGRAM IS SUCCESS

The Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries' raccoon stocking program is going full steam, Ned Thornton, assistant chief of the game division, reports.

Thornton reports that 15 southwest counties are co-operating in the stocking program and will receive 'coons trapped in Tidewater Virginia this year. The 'coons are being caught by trappers in most of the Tidewater counties and then are shipped to the southwestern counties for release.

Game wardens are co-operating and co-ordinating the raccoon shipments. Most of the 'coons being caught are from areas in which they are doing damage to peanut and corn crops, thus relieving farmers of crop damage and aiding the southwest raccoon hunters.

From reports coming to the Commission the stocking program, which has been carried on by the Commission for the past five or six years, has been a tremendous success. The Commission has received orders for over 650 'coons from southwestern counties.

Random shots of the trials, showing early morning start; the galleries beating the brush for a rabbit; and the judges racing to where a rabbit had just been jumped

Scenes from the OLD DOMINION BEAGLE CLUB TRIALS

"Tally-Ho" was the *word* last November as the Old Dominion Beagle Club put some 120 short-legged, long-eared contestants through their paces at the R. B. Brown Farm in Cumberland County.

Under the guidance of Field Marshall Don Smiley, of Baltimore, Md., the galleries found the cottontails abundant. But it was the beagles in the early morning trials that stood out in the running, for although bred to *hold the line*, drought conditions made it difficult for even the most able beagle to hold the line of the wily rabbit.

Doing the judging were Bob Williams, Chester, Pa., and Harry Overcash, Charlotte, N. C., and they really earned their money. Both men showed the agility of a jack rabbit in following the dogs through briars and sedge to choose top dog in each brace.

Old Dominion beaglers failed to take a first in the four-day trials. The 15-inch championships went to Louisiana and North Carolina, while the 13-inch titles were taken by Georgia and Maryland.

Maddox Little Sal, owned by J. M. Harris, of Hopkinsville, Ga., won the 13-inch female class, while Antietum Nifty, owned by G. B. Bachtell, of Hagerstown, Md., took first for the 13-inch dogs.

Marathon's Blue Liner completed her championship in taking the 15-inch female title for owner Edward Mischer, of Baton Rouge, La., while Hayes' High Banker won first in the 15-inch dogs' class for owner W. C. McMillam, of Charlotte, N. C.

Ed Reavis, of Richmond, took third in the 13-inch females division with his Dellas Dorothy Jane.

Commission staff photos

The R. B. Brown farmhouse, located in Cumberland County. On the Browns' 248-acre farm the Old Dominion Beagle Club held its four days of trials

Time out between races for these beagle lovers as they pose with their prize dogs

Posing with the four 15-inch beagle winners (left to right) Bob Williams and Harry Overcash (standing), judges, Hall Baker, Ed Reavis, W. T. Ammerman, and Don Smiley. Reavis is Club President

Work horses of the Dog Mart. (Left tc right) Ira Grinnan, Vernon Groves, E. L. Downy and E. A. Gibson

The Pamunkey Indians were on hand to display tribal costumes and handicrafts

"What am I offered?" Paul "Pop" Peters (right) assists auctioneer, H. Darnell, with disposal of dogs

Random shots of the FREDERICKSBURG DOG MART

The Dog Mart held last October at Fredericksburg officially started in 1698—251 years ago—but the basis of the event took place 20 years earlier.

That was just following the close of the Colonial-Indian campaigns. And as part of the peace, the Colonials agreed with the Indians to have interracial marts and fairs regularly for the exchange of goods.

By 1698 the Indians had decided that they would like to have some of the settlers' superior hunting dogs. The dogs, the red men discovered, were equipped with better noses for hunting than they were.

In turn, the shrewd settlers found out that the Indians possessed gold nuggets, furs and other articles of value. A real truce was arranged for the exchange and the Dog Mart was underway.

As the years passed, the City of Fredericksburg replaced the settlement and the Dog Marts continued to flourish. However, when the Revolutionary War came, the marts were abandoned because of distrust of the restless Indians who were finding out what it was like to be "scalped" by the trade-wise Colonials.

Today, persons from nearby communities bring in their dogs—from the most handsome to the ugliest, purebreds to unknown breeds—for auction and shows. And the Indians still play a prominent role in the Dog Mart. The Pamunkey tribe participates with tribal dances in full regalia and with handicraft displays. The Pamunkeys are the descendants of the most powerful of all 32 tribes in Powhatan's Confederacy.

Commission photos by Kesteloo

Some of the personalities present at the Dog Mart in Fredericksburg

Has Your School Entered?

6th ANNUAL Wildlife Essay Contest

Ends February 15, 1953

$1,000 in Prizes

SCHOOLS ELIGIBLE: Only Virginia schools, elementary and high, grades 5-12 inclusive will be eligible to enter this contest

57 PRIZES

Eight grand prizes, $50 each, one for each grade, totaling....	$400
Eight second prizes, $25 each, one for each grade, totaling....	$200
Eight third prizes, $15 each, one for each grade, totaling....	$120
Sixteen honorable mention prizes, $10 each, two for each grade, totaling.....	$160
Sixteen special mention prizes, $5 each, two for each grade, totaling.....	$80
One school prize, best response.	$40
Grand total.....	$1000

There will be seven prizes in each of the eight competing grades. Grand prize winners will come to Richmond as guests of the sponsors to receive their awards. Others will be given awards in the schools. The school having the best response will be given a special $40 prize for its athletic or general purpose fund. 200 certificates of merit will be awarded in addition to the money grand prizes.

SUBJECT: The Value of Soils, Woods, Waters and Wildlife to Me and My Community

SPONSORED BY: THE VIRGINIA DIVISION OF THE IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA AND THE VIRGINIA COMMISSION OF GAME AND INLAND FISHERIES

Contest Rules

1. Essays must be submitted through the schools participating and each essay must contain a minimum of 500 words.
2. Each entry should bear the following information in the upper right-hand corner of each essay: name, sex, age, grade, school address, school, county, and teacher. Without all of the above information, essays will be disqualified.
3. Students of Virginia schools, grades 5-12 inclusive, will be eligible to enter this contest.
4. All essays must be mailed first class, PREPAID TO VIRGINIA GAME COMMISSION, Box 1642, Richmond, Virginia. Teachers must submit all entries. However, they are requested to indicate their selections of the best essays if they so desire. Essays should be separated by grades with the number of essays in each bundle.
5. No papers will be returned and the decision of the judges will be final. Each sponsoring organization will appoint three conservationists to serve on the judging committee.
6. Judging of essays will be based 50 per cent on coverage and understanding of the subject, 30 per cent on originality and presentation, and 20 per cent on effectiveness of presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammatical correctness.

TEACHERS: Enter your school now! Write for free reference material today!